

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) Separator material for forming a separator for a lead-acid accumulator, wherein the separator material comprises ~~two side edge areas~~, a first layer in the form of a microporous ~~sheet~~ film, which is made of a thermoplastic polyolefin and has a film base sheet ~~and a~~ number of protrusions, each defining an area of increased film thickness, on at least one face of ~~a~~ the film base sheet, and at least one second layer in the form of a planar fleece material which is located on a face of said ~~microporous sheet~~ film having ~~said~~ such protrusions, wherein said fleece material has a thickness of 0.25 mm or less and comprises polyester fibers or a mixture of glass fibers and polyester fibers and wherein the at least one planar fleece material is bonded to said ~~microporous sheet~~ film by a number of welded joints such that the planar fleece material is located at least at the level of the surface of the film base sheet in the area of the welded joints and does not penetrate into this surface, said planar fleece material being bonded to at least some of said protrusions of said ~~microporous sheet~~ film by the welded joints, ~~said protrusions comprising elevated height~~

~~protrusions adapted for receiving said welded joints, and wherein said elevated height protrusions including a rib in each of the two side edge areas of the separator material and the welded joints include welded joints on these two side ribs.~~

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Currently amended) Separator material according to claim 1, characterized in that the protrusions comprise ribs which run vertically and extend over the entire length of said film of the separator material.

4. (Currently amended) Separator material according to claim 3, characterized in that the ribs which run vertically each comprise a rib in each of the two side edge areas of said film of the separator material and the welded joints comprise weld seams which run on these two side ribs.

5. (Previously presented) Separator material according to claim 4, characterized in that the two side ribs are continuous ribs and said welded joints are continuous weld seams.

6. (Previously presented) Separator material according to

claim 4, characterized in that the two side ribs are discontinuous ribs and said welded joints are discontinuous weld seams.

7. (Previously presented) Separator material according to claim 1, characterized in that the welded joints are spot-welded joints.

8. (Canceled)

9. (Currently amended) Separator material according to claim 1 ~~9~~, characterized in that the polyolefin has a molecular weight of at least 300,000, a melt index under normal conditions of substantially 0 and a viscosity number of not less than 600 ml/g.

10. (Original) Separator material according to claim 9, characterized in that the polyolefin is polyethylene.

11. (Previously presented) Separator material according to claim 10, characterized in that the microporous film is produced from polyethylene having a filler content of silica.

12. (Previously presented) Separator material according to claim 1, characterized in that at least 50% of the pores of

the microporous film have a diameter of 0.5 μm or less.

13. (Currently amended) Separator material according to claim 1, characterized in that the microporous film ~~sheet~~ has a thickness of from 0.1 to 0.6 mm in areas without protrusions.

14. (Canceled)

15. (Previously presented) Separator material according to claim 1, characterized in that the fleece material substantially consists of polyester fibres.

16. (Previously presented) Separator material according to claim 1, characterized in that the fleece material comprises a mixture of glass fibres and polyester fibres.

17. (Original) Separator material according to claim 16, characterized in that the content of glass fibres in the mixture is not more than 70 wt. %.

18. (Previously presented) Separator material according to claim 1, characterized in that the fleece material has a thickness of from 0.1 to 0.25 mm.

19. (Currently amended) Process for the production of a

separator material for forming a separator for a lead-acid accumulator, according to claim 1, with the steps: (a) provision of a microporous film sheet, which is made of a thermoplastic polyolefin and has a film base sheet and a number of elevated height protrusions, each defining an area of increased film sheet thickness, on at least one face of ~~a~~ the film base sheet, ~~said separator material having two side edge areas, and wherein said elevated height protrusions include a rib in each of said two side edge areas of the separator material,~~ (b) provision of at least one planar fleece material, (c) location of the at least one planar fleece material on a face of the ~~sheet~~ film having ~~such~~ said protrusions and (d) welding of the at least one planar fleece material with at least some of the protrusions of the ~~sheet~~ film, such that the planar fleece material is located at least at the level of the surface of the film base sheet in the area of the welded joints and does not penetrate into this surface, ~~and the welded joints include welded joints on said two side ribs.~~

20. (Original) Process according to claim 19, characterized in that the welding takes place by means of ultrasonic welding.

21. (Currently amended) Process according to claim 19 or claim 20, characterized in that at least some of the

protrusions of the microporous film sheet have a height of from 0.5 to 0.6 mm and the welding takes place with these protrusions.

22. (Previously presented) Process according to one of claims 19 or 20, characterized in that said planar fleece material has a thickness of from 0.1 to 0.25 mm.

23. (Currently amended) Process according to claim 19, wherein the step of welding of the at least one planar fleece material with at least some of the protrusions of the film sheet causes at least some of the protrusions to disappear completely during the welding process.

24. (Currently amended) Process according to claim 19, wherein the step of locating the at least one planar fleece material on a face of the film sheet having protrusions comprises gradually laying one of said at least one planar fleece material and said film sheet having protrusions on the other in sections.

25. (Currently amended) Process according to claim 19, wherein the step of locating the at least one planar fleece material on a face of the film sheet having protrusions comprises gradually laying one of said at least one planar fleece material and said film sheet having protrusions on

the other continuously.

26. (Currently amended) Separator material according to claim 1, wherein said edge areas of said film sheet are not covered with said planar fleece material.

27. (Previously presented) Separator material according to claim 26, wherein the width of said edge areas is between 5.5 and 9.5 mm.

28. (New) Separator material according to claim 1, wherein said welded joints are ultrasonic welded joints.